



## Exercise 4.10

# Understanding Social Marketing



Social marketing tools can help agencies develop communication campaigns that encourage and support conservation behavior. This exercise introduces three tools and helps participants realize the situations in which they could be used. It is based on a technique called “Six Bits” because each member of a group of six receives a bit of information that will help the group answer the question. In addition to revealing information on the cards, the structure of the exercise enables the participants to practice leadership and cooperative learning strategies. The group cannot solve the question without everyone’s participation.

**Objective:** Participants will match social marketing tools to an appropriate use in a cooperative group challenge.

**Materials:**

*Handout 1: Social Marketing Cards*  
*Fact Sheet 4.10: Social Marketing Tools*  
*Presentation 4.4*

**Time:** 30 minutes

1. Introduce social marketing techniques from ***Fact Sheet 4.10: Social Marketing Tools*** as strategies to help design a communications activity that will help foster behavior change. ***Presentation 4.4*** provides an overview.
2. Ask the participants to form groups of six. Several groups of five will work if you don't have a multiple of six. Distribute one set of social marketing cards (see *Handout 1*) to each group, giving each member one card (or one person two cards in the case of groups of five). Rules for this activity:
  - Do not show or give your card to any other person, but communicate the information on your card accurately.
  - One person has a description of the task.
  - Work together to complete the task.
3. As the groups begin to work, circulate around and note how they begin to function. Is one person the leader or do several people share leadership? Who begins to take notes—the person with the pencil, the woman, the person with the task card? Do single-sex groups operate differently than mixed groups of men and women? What happens to the normally quiet people?

4. These observations can be discussed after the “answer” is shared. A discussion of how resource professionals work together may be fruitful. The exercise is designed to engage everyone, since quiet people cannot revoke participation by giving their cards to someone else. Some additional discussion questions:
  - How do the different groups respond to the challenge?
  - How did leadership unfold?
  - How were decisions made?
  - Did everyone participate equally? Why?
  - What might have made the group more effective or efficient?
  - Did anyone notice ways they could be a better leader or a better contributor to a group process?
5. You can also discuss the social marketing tools! The groups can have different reasons to support matching these tools with the situations. A prompt can work well at the point of purchase to remind people to buy native plants. A demonstration garden can help people learn about native plants. A demonstration yard can also show people how to reduce the risk of wildfire while maintaining a lovely landscape. Either of these scenarios could be considered repeat behaviors or rare behaviors, thus a prompt or a model could be justified. Getting people to attend a meeting, however, is not likely to be a repeated behavior and could be seen as so onerous that a commitment is the only logical way to increase participation. Commitment could also be used to increase native plant purchases or defensible space.

Optional: If you wish to use this exercise to merely review features of social marketing tools and not explore cooperative learning and group process skills, you can reduce a fair amount of frustration by telling participants that one person has the task card in their group. The task is to match three social marketing tools to three interface scenarios. There are many different reasons to use any tool in any scenario, but there is information on all the cards that can help them choose which tool might be best in these cases. Their job is to match the tools to situations and then report on their reasoning.

## Summary

Social marketing tools are fast becoming important aspects of the natural resource agency communications toolbox. Agencies in a number of states are working with community-based social marketing consultants to help design powerful and meaningful campaigns for interface residents and others. What issues might your participants address with social marketing tools?

## Handout 1: Social Marketing Cards



### Card 1

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

- Sometimes people know what to do and how to do it but just forget to do it.
- Good prompts are short, specific reminders.
- Modeling the appropriate behavior can significantly increase participation. People can see how easy it is, and see what the final outcome will look like.
- Written commitments are more powerful than verbal commitments.



### Card 2

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

- Prompts do not provide enough information for people to understand why the action or task is beneficial; prompts work if people already know the reason.
- Demonstration areas can show people how to conduct a behavior and what to expect when they have done it.
- It is useful to ask people to make their commitments in a public setting or to ask a group to consider a collective commitment.
- People must make the commitment voluntarily.



### Card 3

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

- Prompts are more appropriate for repeated behaviors.
- Sometimes people are more willing to start a new behavior if they see someone else has done it.
- People must be interested in participating in the solution before they can be asked to make a commitment.
- Personal contact is needed to obtain a commitment.

**Card 4**

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

- Reminders at the point-of-purchase can help prompt people to buy the right thing.
- A sign or brochure may help make the demonstrated or modeled behavior more explicit.
- During a presentation at a meeting, asking for a show of hands of how many people are willing to read the material, share information with a neighbor, or attend a meeting is one way to obtain a commitment.
- Demonstration areas are a type of model.

**Card 5**

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

- An organized contest may provide a small incentive to encourage everyone to conduct the same action at the same time.
- Many people will act on a commitment because they want to be consistent—their intentions, their promises, and their actions are all in agreement.
- Prompts are reminders located at the site of the behavior.

**Card 6**

*You may not show your card to anyone in the group.*

**The Task:** Match the tool—**prompt**, **commitment**, and **model**—to the most appropriate interface situation:

- Buy and plant native vegetation.
- Reduce the risk of wildfire around your home.
- Attend a county meeting on new land-development regulations.

As you report your decision, also explain how you reached that conclusion. If time allows, select one of these tools and design a campaign to use it.